

# The Library Assistant :

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## EDITORIAL.

The figures given on page 338 under "The Work of the Council" would seem to lend some colour to the opinion of our free-lance contemporary which we controverted in our February Editorial, that assistants should not strive for high educational qualifications because of the meagreness of the outlook. To state it mildly, the figures are a disgrace to the municipalities of England; but they do not alter one iota our previous statement that without high qualifications the modern librarian's position is likely to be a precarious one. In *The Library World* for last month one of the usual parodies of the "Current Views" of *The Library Association Record* again tries to deflect the opinion of library assistants from the severely sane opinions expressed in these pages. The "View Current" should be read by all thinking assistants; it is sensible enough, but it belittles the fact of advancing public knowledge and the necessity of our corresponding advance. We have no doubt of the choice of the wise assistant between the two paths indicated; one means contented, or discontented, mediocrity; the other means security at least.

The chief librarianship of Liverpool is vacant, and will probably be filled before this number appears. It is a matter of considerable consequence to assistant librarians, as the appointment of a little-trained or mediocre man will mean the setting back of library activity in that great district for many years; for it is clear that the work of the largest library system in England must have an important effect upon the surrounding public opinion. It is unfortunate that the authorities at Liverpool—and in nearly every large northern town—do not realize that the position of the librarian is one of responsibility, physical and moral, and therefore deserving of moderate remuneration at the worst; the salary Liverpool offers is perhaps the most offensive undervaluing of the profession which has arrested our attention for a long time.

The Library Association Examinations are to be held later than usual this year. We are asked officially to announce that they will take place in the week, 7th to 12th June, at the London University, South Kensington, and at various provincial centres. The

names of intending candidates must reach Dr. E. A. Baker, M.A., 24, Whitcomb Street, W.C., on or before 15th May.

A special word of gratitude is due to Mr. G. A. Stephen for the thoroughness which marked his paper at the last meeting, and for the great pains he took in preparing an exhibition of binding processes unrivalled in the history of the Association. The fact that Mr. Stephen is hon. secretary of the Binding Sub-Committee of the Library Association should lend authority to what he has to say upon "Edition Binding."

The programme of the Fifteenth Session is now under discussion. The Honorary Secretary would be glad of offers of papers, of suggestions of subjects, or of any help towards improving the meetings and discussions.

The Annual Meeting occurs next month, and with it comes the election of Officers and Council. Members should make it their duty to see that only the best and most representative members are returned to the Council, and should be careful to record their votes.

We are indebted to Mr. John Warner, of the Croydon Libraries, for the notices of professional literature in this number.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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### MAY GENERAL MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Association will be held (by kind invitation of the Libraries Committee and Chief Librarian), at the Reference Library, CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, LEWISHAM, on **Wednesday, 19th May**, at 6.45 o'clock p.m.

**6.45.** Light refreshments by invitation of the Chairman of the Public Libraries Committee.

**7.30.** The following paper will be read and discussed:

"The Function of a Central Library." By **ARTHUR J. HAWKES**, Chief Assistant, Bournemouth Public Libraries.

At this meeting two Auditors will be elected; nominations should reach the Honorary Secretary before the meeting commences. The Library is two minutes' walk from Ladywell Station (book from London Bridge, Cannon Street, or Charing Cross by the S.E. and C.R.), and trams from all the Bridges stop at the door.

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### ELECTION OF COUNCIL AND OFFICERS, 1909-10.

Nominations of persons for election to the Council and Offices of the Association should reach the Honorary Secretary, **Mr W. C. Berwick Sayers**, CENTRAL LIBRARY, TOWN HALL, CROYDON, on or before **Saturday, 22nd May**. The offices to be filled are those of President, Honorary Treasurer, and Honorary Secretary, and the Council is to consist of two Fellows, ten London, and ten Non-London Members or Associates (not more than two of whom shall be elected from one library district). Ballot papers will be issued with the June number of "The Library Assistant," only to members whose subscriptions have been paid.

## NEW MEMBERS.

Fellow: W. Louis Coltman, Southall-Norwood.

Associates: T. Allen, Gravesend; C. F. G. Tessier, Hornsey.

## YORKSHIRE BRANCH.

Associate: Miss D. Hoole, Leeds.

## APPOINTMENT.

## NEW CHIEF LIBRARIAN OF LIVERPOOL.

Mr. G. T. Shaw, Master and Librarian of the Liverpool Athenæum, has been appointed Chief Librarian of the Liverpool Public Libraries, in succession to the late Mr. Peter Cowell. The other selected candidates were Dr. Baker (Woolwich), Messrs. Bond (St. Pancras), Green (Halifax), Hutt (Liverpool Lyceum), Jast (Croydon), Johnston (Hornsey), Purnell (London Library), Quinn (Chelsea). Mr. Quinn withdrew and the final voting was between Messrs. Shaw and Jast.

## EDITION BINDING.\*

By GEO. A. STEPHEN, St. Pancras Public Libraries.

The methods of commercial bookbinding have been completely revolutionised during recent years and there are now cleverly constructed machines that perform efficiently almost every process in the binding of a book.

The first operation in edition binding is folding. This process is done by hand if the quantity of sheets is comparatively small or if the nature of the work necessitates it, but there are numerous folding machines on the market constructed to make various folds. For ordinary book-work the sheets are usually folded three times to produce folded signatures of sixteen pages each. The output of the different machines varies considerably, according to the make of the machine, the number of folds required, and whether it is fed by hand or automatically; the range is from about 2,000 to 10,000 signatures per hour. After the sheets are folded the plates and maps are tipped (*i.e.* pasted) to their respective signatures and the end-papers are attached to the first and last signatures of the book. There are machines

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\*Read before the Library Assistants' Association at the Shoreditch Central Public Library, 21st April, 1909. Owing to exigencies of space only a short outline of that part of the paper concerning the processes is here given, but it is hoped that the complete paper will be printed elsewhere with illustrations. An illustrated article on "Decorative End-papers," by Mr. Stephen, describing some of the end-papers exhibited at this meeting, will appear in the June number of *The Bibliophile*.

even for this work and they accomplish it with a neatness and speed that are truly astonishing.

The next process is "gathering." This work continues to be done by hand in many binderies, although it may be carried out by a gathering machine. There are several different machines in use, but their action is similar: the signatures are placed in a series of boxes or hoppers and they are delivered automatically on to an endless band which travels in front of the boxes; by the time the band has travelled across the machine a complete set of signatures has been obtained and it is only necessary for such signatures to be removed. The book must now be collated in order to see that all the signatures are in their correct sequence and that none are in duplicate or missing. After this operation the book is ready to be sewn. Thread and wire are both used in the sewing of books, but in this country wire is not used to any great extent. With one exception (a Brehmer machine) all the machines sew with *double* thread. The needles used in the Smyth machines are curved and their curvature determines the length of the stitch; the needles used in the Brehmer, Martini, and Edler machines are straight. One of the Brehmer machines sews with single thread "all along" inside the sections and while so doing it cuts the fold of each section at the head and tail. This method meets the requirements of extra-thick books (such as large directories) because it is desirable that the swell in the back of a book caused by the thread should be reduced to a modicum, but it is obviously undesirable for ordinary edition work. By the use of one or other of these book-sewing machines sewing in several different ways may be done; the books may either be sewn "all along" or "two sheets on"; the sewing may be plain (*i.e.* French), through mull, through or over tapes, or over cords. The output per hour of the different machines varies according to the machine used and the nature of the work, but any of the above-mentioned machines will sew work equal in quantity to that done by at least five girls, while some of the machines will do the work of from ten to twelve hand-sewers. A machine will easily sew about 2,000 signatures per hour.

After being sewn, the book is made compact by being smashed or pressed in a smashing or nipping machine, and it is then ready for the treatment of its edges. If the edges are to be cut the work is performed by a cutting machine, of which there is an almost endless variety. Some machines have only one knife, others have two knives and one machine has three; some of them are self-clamping, others must be hand-clamped by means of a screw. Most of them, however, work on the same principle: several books are placed on the bed of the machine

according to a gauge, the clamp grips them tightly, and a heavy knife descends and rapidly cuts the edges. When the book has been trimmed it is "glued-up" and afterwards rounded and backed. The Crawley machine rounds and backs each book by one continuous action, at speeds varying from 350 to 750 books per hour, according to the nature of the work, the ability of the operator, and the size of the machine. The operator simply feeds the book between a pair of rounding rollers and the machine does the rest of the work in a thorough and effective manner. The book is now ready to receive its back lining. The back is coated with glue, a strip of mull is attached to it and a strip of strong paper is put on top of this to give additional strength. As soon as the book is dry it is ready to have a complete cover attached to it. The making of book-covers or "cases" is now done entirely by machinery. The action of the Smyth and Sheridan case-making machines differs very considerably, but they both automatically glue the cloth, apply the boards and back lining, and turn in the edges of the cloth, thereby making a complete cover. The cover is now ready to receive its title and any ornamentation that may be desired. Cloth book-covers may be decorated by blind stamping, embossing, stamping in gold or alloyed metals, or printing in colour, or by a combination of some of these processes. For blocking in blind or in gold and for printing in colour dies or blocks cut in relief are required; for blocking in relief a die of hardened brass cut in intaglio and a counter die made up of mill-board, sugar-paper or papier-mâché, are necessary. There are numerous machines for doing these different kinds of work. Most of the blocking machines work in similar manner: the block is fixed to an upper plate, situated under a heating-box kept at correct temperature by gas jets; the cover, after having had the gold leaf laid on, is placed on the lower plate according to gauges, and it is then brought into contact with the die which gives the impression and fixes the gold leaf. The superfluous gold-leaf is afterwards rubbed off, leaving the ornamentation visible. Colour work is done without heat.

The book and its cover are now combined—an operation termed "casing-in." The Smyth casing-in machine performs this work in a more satisfactory manner than is usually done by hand, and runs at an estimated speed of about 500 books per hour. After a book has been placed on a radial arm it is brought into the centre of the machine, two rollers apply paste to either side of the book, a cover is automatically placed over it and forced into the joints, and the sides are pressed before the book is removed by the operator. Another machine for doing this work is the "Parkside" casing-in machine, which is esti-

mated to run up to a speed of about 720 books per hour. This machine rounds the back of the cover and places it over a book which has meanwhile been fed and lowered into the machine to receive a coat of paste from a pair of pasting-plates; as the book ascends it rises into and lifts the cover, and the cased book is then removed by the operator. As the books leave the casing-in machine they are consigned to the standing press in which they are stacked, the books in each pile being arranged with their backs and fore-edges alternating. After remaining in the press a few hours the books are removed ready for delivery to the publisher.

The primary desiderata of all books, so far as their physical aspect is concerned, are durability of paper and durability of binding; yet a cursory examination of publishers' books at the present day will reveal the fact that they are the very antithesis of the durable books of earlier centuries. Modern books are usually printed on paper of very poor quality, inferior binding materials are largely used, the machines employed in the different processes of edition binding are rarely permitted to do the good work it is possible for them to perform, and the work is rushed through the bindery with reckless haste. That there is great need for an improved publishers' binding is appallingly evident to librarians. With the object of improving the production of modern books, the Library Association has appointed a Book Production Committee, and this Committee is now drawing up a series of specifications which it is hoped will be favourably received by publishers. There is practical reason why this Committee should be sanguine of success. The Binding Committee of the American Library Association has succeeded in persuading several large publishing firms to issue some of their books in a strong binding. The Houghton Mifflin Company are to be highly commended on their excellent reinforced binding for "The Leaven of Love" by Clara L. Burnham. This book is sewn "all along" by hand, with Irish linen thread, over three tapes; the first and last signatures are reinforced in their folds with strips of linen; and the end-papers are made with cloth joints and sewn through. The extra charge to the trade and to the public for this serviceable binding is 10 cents., the retail price of the book being 1.50 dollars. The achievements of the A.L.A. should prove a powerful lever to the L.A. in opening up negotiations with the English publishers. If the publishers can be convinced that their present bindings are unsuitable, and desirable improvements are suggested, it may confidently be expected that the publishers will accede to reasonable demands, provided adequate payment is guaranteed.

The latter part of Mr. Stephen's paper dealt with artistic end-papers and the historical and artistic aspects of commercial bookbindings. Mr. Stephen exhibited a number of specimens of pamphlets and books illustrating the various processes in edition binding, and a collection of about sixty artistic end-papers and over one hundred English and American book-covers designed by artists of repute. The collection of book-covers included examples of the work of the following artists: Edwin A. Abbey, Miss Margaret Armstrong, G. Fletcher Babb, F. D. Bedford, R. Anning Bell, William Bonté, L. Leslie Brooke, Gordon Browne, W. H. Cowlshaw, Walter Crane, Lewis Davis, Lewis F. Day, Christopher Dean, The Decorative Designers of New York, Edmund Dulac, G. W. Edwards, G. W. Eve, H. Granville Fell, Miss Althea Giles, Ingleson C. Goodison, Kate Greenaway, Thomas Guilfoyle, John Hassall, Hubert von Herkomer, E. Gratton Holloway, Laurence Housman, Selwyn Image, A. J. Iorio, Garth Jones, Sydney R. Jones, F. R. Kimborough, R. Knowles, Gertrude Leese, Mrs. B. McManus Mansfield, Gerald Moira, Talwin Morris, William Morris, Miss Alice C. Morse, "A. Nobody," Howard Pyle, Charles Robinson, W. Heath Robinson, J. A. Schweinfurth, Byam Shaw, Miss W. Smith, A. O. Spare, Arthur Stratton (and Miss B. A. Waldram), E. J. Sullivan, A. A. Turbayne, Miss M. V. Wheelhouse, Gleeson White, Stanford White, Mrs. Sarah M. Whitman, and Miss Alice B. Woodward.

The following publishing firms kindly contributed to the exhibition, and our best thanks are due to them. **English Publishers:** B. T. Batsford; Geo. Bell and Sons; A. and C. Black; Blackie and Son; A. H. Bullen; Cassell and Co.; J. M. Dent and Co.; H. Frowde; Wells Gardner, Darton and Co.; The Gresham Publishing Co.; Hutchinson and Co.; T. C. and E. C. Jack; John Lane; Longmans, Green and Co.; Sampson Low, Marston and Co.; Macmillan and Co.; Elkin Mathews; David Nutt; Fisher Unwin; and Frederick Warne and Co. **American Publishers:** The Century Co.; Duffield and Co.; Harper and Brothers; Houghton Mifflin Co.; J. B. Lippincott Co.; Little, Brown and Co.; G. P. Putnam's Sons; and Charles Scribner's Sons.

## THE JUNIOR WORK OF CLASSIFICATION.\*

By MISS VIOLET A. AITKEN, Islington Public Libraries.

It is true that the actual classifying of the books does not come within the scope of an ordinary assistant's work, but, nevertheless, it is necessary that he should soon become acquainted with the different divisions and sub-divisions of the classification in vogue in his particular library; for, if he does not have to assign the class numbers to the books, he has to prepare them for the shelves and also must be able to find them when once they have been shelved.

Suppose the classification in his particular library happens to be the Brown Subject Classification. This is a fine example of a mixed notation of letters and figures, letters being assigned to the different main classes, which are divided into sub-divisions by figures. After he has committed these different main classes to memory and has carefully studied the position of each main class in the library and the subjects and positions of the books themselves whilst shelving or dusting, he ought to be able to ascer-

\*Read before the Library Assistants' Association at the Battersea Central Public Library, on 18th March, 1909.

tain the location of any particular subject with comparative ease. It is absolutely necessary that an assistant, when asked, should be able to locate any subject at once, and not have to turn up the classification index first of all. It is a very bad plan indeed to trust always to the index; for, in an open-access library especially, you are often asked for books on a particular subject—say mechanics—when there is not a classification handy, and it lowers you immediately in the eyes of the critical “British Public,” if you are not able to take them to the shelves in question at once, but have to search for a classification, and look up the index in order to find that “Mechanics” is to be found at the beginning of the main class B; to be more exact B020.

We will now run through the various processes of the practical application of a classification scheme. It is not my intention to enlarge upon the different “pros” and “cons,” which determine the placing of a certain book into a certain class, etc.; I leave that to the librarian or chief assistant; but I am going to discuss the processes through which the book has to go after its class mark has been assigned.

The classification symbol of each book has to be entered on all records of the library. Supposing the book in question happens to be Green’s “Short History of the English People.” We find that this book has been given the symbol V500.10, which should be written inside the book, preferably on the back or front of the title page. Now we have to see that this V500.10 appears in all the necessary places. First of all the class number is lettered in gilt on the back of the book, or, if preferred, is written in bold figures on a small tag, and pasted on the back about one or one and a half inches from the bottom. Care should be taken that the lettering of all the books is uniform and regular, for it is much easier to scan a level line of numbers than to have to dodge up and down the books in order to ascertain the classification of each individual book, as would be the case if they were not lettered evenly, or if the distance was measured from the top instead of the bottom of the book. After the book has been lettered, the classification number has to be written on the board label, which is pasted on the inside of the front cover, and also on the book-card, for in a good many libraries now-a-days the classification symbol is used for charging purposes. For example, take Green’s “History” again. On the board label is written the class number V500.10. This number is also written on the top of the book-card, followed by the author’s name “Green,” and the title “Short History of the English People.” When the book is taken away it is charged up to the borrower, that is to say the book-card is slipped into the borrower’s ticket, and then inserted in classification order



together with the records of other books issued. When the book is returned, the date, which has been stamped on the date-label, the classification, and the author and title direct the assistant to the place in the issue where the ticket may be found.

The work of the librarian and his staff is far from complete after the books have been classified and ready for shelving, for now it remains for the shelves of the whole library to be thoroughly labelled and guided so as to make the resources of the library on any particular subject available without a prolonged search. This is by far the most important task of all; no matter what scheme of classification is used or how good the collection is, their value is very much diminished if there are no guides to the arrangement of the books.

In order to guide a classified library well the very first thing that is required is a rough plan of the room on which can be seen the position and extent of the different main classes, *e.g.*: A, Generalia, in yellow; B.C.D., Physical Science, in red; etc. This plan should be placed in a most prominent position near the entrance if possible. The next thing that is necessary is to set out the contents of each main class on a large framed card about 12ins. by 24ins. in a place where it can easily be seen to serve as a rough guide to the contents of each stack. A good position for these guides is at the top of the stack exactly in the middle and slightly tilted forward so that one may read them with greater ease. If desired, smaller cards, about 6ins. by 12ins. and similar to those before mentioned, but only bearing the name and letter of the class, could be hung from the top end of the stack projecting outwards so as to be seen by persons passing up and down the gangways.

Now we come to the guiding of the shelves themselves, and no pains should be spared here for, the more guides there are on the shelves the easier it will be for the public to find the books required. Each shelf should be labelled with the classification with which it starts and also with the names of some subjects contained on the shelf. The staff should print these guides on slips of white cardboard, using a rubber printing set and ordinary printing ink. These labels should be affixed to the fore-edge of the shelf by means of a label-holder. The most simple shelf label-holder consists of a slip of transparent xylonite bent into a right-angle and pinned to the underside of the shelf by means of a drawing-pin. These holders are very handy, for they can be cut with scissors to suit the size of the label required. Also, they are easily affixed and can be removed or re-adjusted with little trouble.

The most important guides in an open-access

library are the index to the classification and the subject catalogue, as they form the keys to the arrangement to the entire stock. Classification indexes, together with a short explanation as to how they are used, should be placed in various parts of the library for the general use of the public. Care should be taken that the index is not confused with the catalogue and, where possible, an index to the actual subjects contained in the library should be compiled and used in preference to the classification index itself, which is sure to contain a good many subjects that are not represented in the library.

The subject catalogue should be in sheaf form and written on buff tinted manila slips—these being the most durable. For a printed catalogue, beside not only being very expensive, is out of date almost before it is printed. If possible, it should be arranged that this sheaf catalogue should be shelved with the books themselves, otherwise it is very inconvenient; it causes a great deal of useless walking to and fro between the catalogue and the shelves in order to ascertain if the books required are in circulation or not. Also, it causes over-crowding in the portion of the library where the catalogue is placed and this can be avoided for, by placing the catalogue with each class the catalogue-hunters are distributed all over the library.

Leaving the question of the practical application of a classification scheme and the various guides that are necessary in order to explain it fully, I will just say a few words that will perhaps benefit those aspiring juniors who are thinking of taking the Association examination in classification at some future period. Classes are held at the London School of Economics by Mr. Jast every alternate year in theoretical classification, and all assistants should take advantage of these classes, for it is almost impossible to obtain information on this subject elsewhere. Also, the classes are based entirely on the Association syllabus. For the actual classifying of the books the candidate has more or less to depend upon himself, for practice is what is wanted more than anything else. A good plan is for him to take a set of books that have already been classified, cover up the classification number, and try to classify them for himself. In this way he ought to be able to check all errors for himself, and besides, he always has his librarian, who is always ready to help any diligent assistant to overcome any difficult questions.

All persons studying classification should carefully read through the various articles and books that have been mentioned by Mr. Brown in his "Annotated Syllabus," a second edition of which will be published shortly, and if they diligently and earnestly apply themselves to the study of the same they will find that, with the aid of the information they contain, they will be able to master the difficulties connected with this most difficult subject.

### CHILDREN'S HALLS.\*

By MISS K. E. JONES, Superintendent, Children's Hall,  
Canton Branch Library, Cardiff.

I want to try and show you a little of what the actual work with children is like in Cardiff, our halls being practically the first of the kind successfully run on the present lines in Great Britain.

During the time I was librarian at Penarth, I was greatly impressed with the necessity of a reading room entirely for children. On a winter's night it was no unusual thing to see a whole row of small boys sitting up the staircase reading the books they had just borrowed. Speaking at the meeting of the Library Association at Leeds some five years ago, Mr. Ballinger described an ideal children's hall, concluding with these words: "I should be glad to see the experiment of the reading hall tried in one or two districts; if only the means were available, my own mind is clear as to the result." Since then, two halls have been opened in Cardiff and one of them alone has been visited by 34,500 children during the last year. This fact alone speaks for the success of the experiment.

The rules and regulations governing a children's hall should be of the simplest, but these firmly enforced. We have only three unvarying rules in Canton; every child is required to be clean, quiet, and obedient. Inside the door a convenient lavatory is provided where the small folk may wash their hands.

It was difficult at first to make them come into the room quietly, but, after a few months training, they have learnt to walk in without disturbing those who are reading, and proceed to choose their books and fill their application slips. The correct filling of this form is practically the test for admission to the hall. Obedience was a much more difficult matter to obtain, but that difficulty has also been almost completely overcome.

The large number of children we get, and the constant coming and going create a general spirit of restlessness, and a certain amount of quite unavoidable noise. Discipline in a library is absolutely imperative; children must be taught to respect the rights of others. One of the first things necessary for a superintendent of a children's hall is patience; patience without limit; but never let a boy mistake your patience for weakness.

The books read by the children seem to vary very little;

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\*Read before the South Wales Branch of the Library Assistants' Association, at the Central Library, Cardiff, on 16th December, 1908.

they prefer to read one recommended by another boy as "alright" to trying an unknown one. A book is always put away for any reader who asks until he has finished it.

The amount of knowledge required to engineer a successful children's hall is like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, extensive and peculiar. Don't despise any piece of information; it will come in useful at some unexpected moment. A great many school children come for help with their essays. They are allowed to use any books we have available in the Library on the subjects wanted; this privilege is greatly appreciated.

During the day the hall is used by classes from the schools, when the children are shown books and pictures bearing on the subjects they learn in school. The pictures, which are mounted on strong brown paper and the description clearly written on each one, are passed round the class, and a short instruction given about the most notable ones; the children take notes and ask questions about those they don't understand. After their return to school they are required to write an essay about the pictures they have seen. Some of these essays are remarkably intelligent and show what a fund of information can be derived from this form of instruction.

About twice a month during the winter we have popular lectures illustrated by lantern views, one for adults and one for children. The tickets for the children's lectures are distributed mainly through the teachers and are given to the children who have the necessary number of good conduct marks.

The end we are aiming at in this special work with the children is the cultivation of their tastes for reading good books, which is one of the most important influences that one can bring to bear upon character and which must ultimately work not only for the good of the individual child, but of the whole community. To teach them

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

## PROCEEDINGS.

### APRIL GENERAL MEETING.

The April General Meeting was held by kindness of the Chief Librarian, Mr. William C. Plant, at the Public Library, Shoreditch, on Wednesday, 21st April, at 7.30 p.m. Mr. G. A. Stephen had arranged an excellent and extensive exhibition of end-papers, covers, and books in various stages of binding, which were examined with great interest.

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. Benson Thorne) presided over an attendance which for some unexplained reason was disappointingly small, especially when the interest of the proceedings is considered; the entire attendance was 32. In a few brief words the President introduced the reader of the paper.

Mr. G. A. STEPHEN then read his paper on "Commercial Book-binding." Mr. Stephen's paper was longer than our usual papers, and was illustrated at every point by examples. We are able to publish on page 326 the resumé which Mr. Stephen has prepared.

Mr. H. T. COUTTS (Islington) congratulated Mr. Stephen upon the practical nature of his paper and the thoroughness of the exhibition. Publishers' covers were not bindings at all, but merely casings; it was a sin against books to paste their sides on to the boards as the sole binding. Books should be lettered on the backs; cloths should be of a fast colour. The principal feature of a book was its sewing.

Mr. J. D. STEWART (Islington) pointed out the importance of flexible glue; the old glue that cracked easily was useless. Wire-sewing, such as that used in Baedeker's guides was as good as thread-sewing.

Mr. A. O. HEYNER thought Mr. Stephen's knowledge profound. He had pointed out the detriment of wire-stitching to the folds of books; it tore the sections leaf from leaf, and in the treatment of such books the binder had to insert a strip of paper between each leaf, which increased the thickness of the finished work in an ugly fashion.

Mr. H. R. PURNELL (Croydon) thought artistic end-papers were rather over-done. He also deprecated the use of maps as end-papers in topographical works. When such works were rebound the maps were lost.

THE HONORARY SECRETARY (Mr. Berwick Sayers) in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Stephen, remarked that the beauty of books had increased, but the standard of durability was still very low; spongy papers and perishable art papers made each book a separate problem for the binder, and satisfactory binding could only be obtained by studying the material to be used in relation to the material of the book.

Mr. J. D. YOUNG (Greenwich) seconded, and the vote was accorded with enthusiasm.

Mr. STEPHEN replied briefly to the various points raised in the discussion.

A vote of thanks was heartily accorded to Mr. Plant for his welcome on the motion of the President and Mr. Hopwood.

Mr. PLANT, in his reply, said it gave him pleasure to welcome the Association at any time. He also added some remarks to the discussion.

An interesting half-hour was spent by the members in studying the exhibits after the meeting.

# IRISH BRANCH: ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS OF IRELAND: FEBRUARY MEETING.

The usual monthly meeting of the above Branch was held in the Central Reference Library. Mr. R. J. Gourley presided.

The minutes of the previous meeting being read and passed, Mr. JAMES F. SCILLEY read a paper on "Charging Systems," showing a thorough study of the methods used in various libraries. This being his initial attempt, he was heartily congratulated on his effort. It was recommended that papers like these be kept for the use of those studying for the examinations.

Mr. D. H. SIMPSON, who had been too much engaged to write a technical paper, gave some reminiscences of his early career as a librarian, and kept his audience amused by various escapades and encounters with the public, especially those who had been inclined to rowdiness. Mr. Simpson's paper was enjoyed greatly.

The meeting terminated with votes of thanks to the readers of the papers.

## MARCH MEETING.

The March meeting was held in the Donegall Road Branch, which was opened Friday, 5th March. The Chairman, Mr. R. J. GOURLEY, presided.

Mr. JAMES FAGAN read a paper entitled "Fore-Names in Author Entries." He opened his paper by explaining the use of the term "Christian" name, and in a humorous manner dealt with this difficult phase of cataloguing, referring to Cutter as the librarian's "New Testament" which solved a large number of the problems they had to deal with in connexion with fore-names in cataloguing.

There was a brief discussion, after which the chairman rose to perform what he considered an extremely pleasant duty. One of the members of the Association had lately plunged into the sea of matrimony, and the Association in honour of the event had decided to present him with a marble clock, which in the name of the A.A.L.I. he asked him to accept, carrying with it the sincere good wishes for the future happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Simpson. Other members spoke in terms of the greatest respect for Mr. Simpson, all cordially wishing him prosperity.

Mr. D. H. SIMPSON, in replying, said this came as a great surprise, and he could hardly find words to express his gratitude to the members for their kindness, and thanked them heartily on behalf of Mrs. Simpson and himself.

Papers were arranged for next meeting from Messrs. Wilson and Atkinson on "Annotation" and "Library Administration" respectively.

## THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL.

In connection with the question of Professional Registration, the Council, before adopting the standard of an annual salary of £120 as a desirable qualification for admission to the Fellowship roll of the Library Association, should such a roll be instituted, has circularised 125 of the more important libraries in the Kingdom to ascertain how many assistant librarians earn £120 or more yearly. The smaller libraries, which naturally cannot have assistants with such a salary, were not included, and the census may be regarded as practically complete. There are 173 assistants qualified under the adopted clause in the libraries that follow:—

The adopted clause is as follows:	
Belfast .....	3
Birkenhead .....	1
Birmingham .....	17
Bolton .....	1
Bootle .....	1
Bradford .....	1
Brighton .....	2
Cardiff .....	4
Carlisle .....	1
Croydon .....	5
Derby .....	1
Edinburgh .....	8
Glasgow .....	16
Hornsey .....	2
Leeds .....	2
Leicester .....	2
Liverpool .....	13
LONDON :	
Battersea .....	1
Camberwell .....	6
Chelsea .....	2
Finsbury .....	1
Fulham .....	2
Greenwich .....	1
Hackney .....	1
Hammersmith .....	2
Hampstead .....	2
Holborn .....	1
Islington .....	3
Kensington .....	6
Poplar .....	2
St. Pancras .....	1
Stepney .....	4
Stoke Newington .....	1
LONDON—(cont.)	
Wandsworth .....	2
Westminster .....	4
Woolwich .....	2
Manchester .....	14
Newcastle-upon-Tyne .....	5
Nottingham .....	3
Portsmouth .....	3
Reading .....	1
Richmond .....	1
Rochdale .....	1
Salford .....	8
Sheffield .....	9
Sunderland .....	1
Tottenham .....	1
Wimbledon .....	1
York .....	1

From one or two libraries there were no returns. The thanks of the Council have again been tendered to Mr. H. T. Coutts, this time for his work in connection with the recent successful social evening. The Council has under consideration the publication in pamphlet form of some of the best papers contributed to "The Library Assistant" as a "Library Assistants' Association Series."

## NOTABLE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE.

**Bodleian Library.** Staff Kalendar, 1909; Supplement to the Staff-Kalendar, 1909.

The Kalendar takes the form of a chronological arrangement of the duties to be performed by the various members of the staff. Everyday duties, apparently, are the only part of the Bodleian routine not included. The supplement (173 pp.), forming nearly half of the volume, contains the nucleus of a directory to the practice of the Library, and contains the regulations relating to the assistants, rules for the good order of the different departments, cataloguing rules, etc. To the average present-day librarian who is obliged to economise in every direction, the prospect of publishing such a manual as this and of the regular performance and observance of a set of duties and rules similar to those which appear within its pages, must remain a somewhat hopeless dream of the very dim future. The little work is very suggestive.

**Bulawayo Public Library.** Catalogue of the Lending and Reference Departments. Compiled by D. Niven, Librarian, 1908.

An alphabetical arrangement under authors, titles, and subjects. The subject entries are rather unsatisfactory, especially when under such vague headings as "Art, Arts, Artists," "History," and "Man," we find only a bare and indiscriminate selection of author, subject and title entries jumbled together in one alphabet. The classification used in the

Library is a modified Dewey system.

**Manchester Libraries Committee.** Report of a Visit to Libraries in the United States and Canada by Representatives of the Committee, 1908.

The deputation, which consisted of Messrs. Henry Plummer, T. C. Abbott, and C. W. Sutton, the chairman, deputy-chairman, and chief librarian respectively, left England in April, 1908, and visited about seventy libraries of every description and size, from national and state libraries to small branches. The notes on the general features of libraries are followed by detailed descriptions of the more important institutions visited, including the Library of Congress, New York Public Library, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and the Brooklyn Public Library. Five pages of suggestions and twenty-nine admirable photographs of plans and buildings conclude the report. Of the four appendices two deal with the procedure followed in planning the Brooklyn Central Library, a third embodies suggestions by Dr. Canfield of the Columbia University Library, and a fourth consists of a table showing the dimensions in feet of the sites, buildings, reading rooms, and the various other rooms of twenty-six American libraries. According to the original intention the report deals almost entirely with the larger and more important institutions of the United States. A most profitable book.

**Stoke Newington Public Library.** Milton Ter-Centenary Celebration: Catalogue of Exhibits and Programme of Entertainments; December 9th, 1908. One shilling net.

A most elaborate annotated catalogue—with fac-simile title pages and admirable bibliographical entries—of the exhibition of Milton's works and Miltoniana, held in the Small Hall of the Stoke Newington Public Library from December 9th to December 12th, 1908. That a special collection in Stoke Newington was possible was chiefly due to the fact that the chairman of the Public Libraries Committee, Wynne E. Baxter, Esq., J.P., D.L., is the possessor of a unique Milton Collection, and generously placed the gems of that collection (including first editions of almost all Milton's works) at the disposal of those who arranged the exhibition. The Public Library authority is certainly to be congratulated upon their enterprise in the matter.

**Hatcher, A. F.** The Evolution of Libraries in Europe: Reprinted from *The University Review*. 1908.

A thirteen-page summary of library history, principally in relation to Europe, from the earliest times to the present day. We glean from it the rather interesting information that the Germans have anticipated us in the foundation of a professorship of library science — this at Göttingen University, over twenty years ago.

**Literary Year-Book, 1909.** Routledge. Five shillings net.

Contains the usual directories of authors and authors' assistants, publishers, and other firms engaged in book-production, public, university, college, and other libraries, British and foreign societies, etc. An extremely useful feature is the tabulated list of the contents of cheap series of reprints. For the third year in succession the section dealing with Public Libraries has been revised under the auspices of the Library Association. "The Year's Work in the Library," by a Public Librarian, would be of greater interest, we think, if more space were devoted to the library movement generally, even if it necessitated the curtailing of some of the pages now dealing with the work of the Library Association.

**English Catalogue of Books, 1908.** Low, Marston and Co. Six shillings net.

The year's output shows a decrease of ninety-three volumes on that for 1907. This decrease is inconsiderable, but on analysing the figures it will be seen that there has also been a slight fall in the average



class of book published. A greater proportion of cheap reprints have appeared, the actual percentage of these for 1907 and 1908 being 22.3 and 23.5 respectively. Taking the year's output by class, the largest decrease was 93 in the division of Political and Social Economy; and the largest increase, 55 in the division of Arts and Sciences. Fiction shows an increase of five. Once again the librarian is indebted to the publishers for the prompt way in which they have produced this, one of the most accurate and most valuable of bibliographical tools.

**Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.** Catalogue of Books in the Children's Department. One dollar net, post paid.

In every way a model of what a children's catalogue should be, though few English libraries are likely to imitate the standard of excellence on account of the expense involved. The catalogue includes the titles of 2,500 carefully selected books suitable for children, and is based on ten years of study and observations of children's needs and wishes. Many experts on various subjects have been consulted in the process of selection. Of the 604 pages 255 are devoted to an elaborately annotated author list, the annotations having been specially written for children; 294 to a subject index, and the remainder to a title list. To increase its usefulness publishers and prices have been added in the author list. English prices have been given in cases where they are lower than the American, but American editions may be obtained.

Also received:—**Reports:** Pratt Institute Free Library (Brooklyn, U.S.)

Report for year ending June, 1908. St. Bride Foundation Institute, Thirteenth Report, 1907-1908.

**Bulletins:** Brooklyn, U.S., Public Library, Quarterly Bulletin, v. 1. (new series), Nos. 1 and 2, October, 1908; January, 1909. Pratt Institute Free Library (Brooklyn, U.S.) Bulletin, series 4, Nos. 1 and 2, October, 1908; January, 1909. Finsbury Public Libraries, Quarterly Guide for Readers, v. 15, No. 59, January, 1909. Grand Rapids, U.S., Public Library, Bulletin, v. 5, Nos. 1 and 2, January and February, 1909. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, U.S., Monthly Bulletin, v. 13, Nos. 9 and 10, November and December, 1908.

**Reviews:** American Library Association, Bulletin, v. 2, Nos. 5 and 6, September (papers and proceedings of the Minnetonka Conference), and November, 1908. Bulletin du Bibliophile et du Bibliothécaire (monthly), November, December, January, and February, 1908-09. The Library (quarterly), v. 10, No. 37, January, 1909. Library Work (quarterly), v. 2, No. 4, January, 1909. Rivista delle Biblioteche e Degli Archivi, v. 19, Nos. 9-11, September-November, 1908.

**Miscellaneous:** Brighton, Official Guide to the Public Library, Museum, and Fine Art Galleries, 48 pp. Brighton Public Art Galleries, Catalogue of the Autumn Exhibition, 1908, 31 pp. Brooklyn, U.S., Public Library, International Peace: a List of Books, with References to Periodicals, in the B.P.L., 53 pp. Roberts, H. D., The Brighton Public Library, Museums, and Fine Art Galleries: a Retrospect, 16 pp. Wallasey Public Libraries, Brief Reading Lists on Subjects of Debate in Wallasey, January-April, 1909, 15 pp.

The above works are available in the L.A.A. Library (Librarian: Mr. A. H. Carter, St. Martin's Public Library, W.C.); the only condition is that members shall pay postage. Members should see that all publications of their own libraries are sent to the Library.

### A NOTE ON INFORMATION BUREAUX IN LIBRARIES.

The Information Bureau as it is understood in America, and as it is gradually growing in England, is the adaptation of the resources of the libraries to the work of the quickest of quick reference. Very little has been written on the subject in England and a brief statement of its aims and objects may therefore be useful to our readers. At Cardiff, for example, the Information Bureau is made effective by the use of the telephone. A counter in the news-room is placed in the charge of a qualified assistant, and on shelves around him are disposed directories, year books, and other similar works of quick reference. The public, and particularly the business houses of the city, are invited to apply by telephone, which has a receiver at this counter, for addresses and any information of a like character. The assistant makes the reference and telephones it to the enquirer. A record in book form is kept of all the queries answered with the answer, and so a certain amount of useful information is being accumulated. This form of Information Bureau has been specialised very highly in America. A particular part of the training of the library staffs out there is devoted to a knowledge of the contents of reference books, and especially to such works as "Whitaker's Almanack," which are mines of unexpected information. A part of the library is set aside exclusively for the Information Bureau. It is staffed by assistants in close touch, by telephone, with the various rooms in the library. In the Bureau itself, as at Cardiff, but on a larger scale, are kept all the most rapid of quick reference books, indexes to periodicals, directories, and so forth. A large part of the time of the staff is occupied in making cuttings from newspapers. These are classified and stored either upon mounts or by one of the various systems of vertical filing, and are indexed. Here again the enquirer may ask for information on any topic mentioned in the daily newspapers, such as a point in geography, the population of a given place, or common legal advice. All information so given is recorded on cards and carefully indexed. It is therefore clear that work of this nature demands a thorough acquaintance with and an appreciation of passing events. The assistant in charge of it must recognise the salient features of any movement, in the social, political, literary, artistic and commercial world around him. Otherwise it would be easy to accumulate a heterogeneous mass of newspaper cuttings of little or no value. Just as the magazine, if wisely indexed, can be made to supplement the literature existing in books, so the newspaper can be made to provide immediate knowledge on passing things. About two years ago

Mr. G. E. Roebuck expounded in *The Library World* an ingenious method of newspaper cutting and storage. We recommend all who are studying this question to turn up Mr. Roebuck's article as a very good statement of the first aims to be kept in sight in an information bureau. It will be easy for any student who has a few of the foregoing facts in mind to work out ways in which the bureau idea might be extended. It is the duty of a reference library to afford information on any topic, however important or trivial, which can be answered by the means of books. The bureau is simply an extension of the idea and its function is to be able to answer any question of the kind which rise daily to the surface of things. One extension is that which has been adopted by the Croydon libraries, the provision of information for holiday makers. These libraries have a collection, as far as it has been possible to make it, of the current literature of all the holiday and touring agencies in Europe. These have been classified, and any enquirer desiring to go to a particular place may obtain the information as to fares, hotel accommodation, the features of the locality and may compare the facilities offered by all the companies, railway or otherwise, which run to the place. Not only is this a useful public service in itself, but it has reinforced the topographical collection of the libraries in a most effective manner. The student will also have to consider the method of arranging cuttings, pamphlets, and all other information collected by the bureau, much of which is in single sheet form, and therefore very difficult to handle. The various library supply companies have elaborated the systems of filing considerably and the merits of these should be discussed before any is adopted. Card indexing is of course the best and simplest method of providing a key to the material. The classification for such material must be very minute indeed, and the ideal classification for such fugitive matter is probably the Brussels expansion of the Decimal Classification. We shall not pursue this subject any further at present save to say that the assistant at the bureau must have a knowledge of bibliographies, indexes, encyclopædias, gazeteers and dictionaries far beyond that possessed by the average British library assistant. He must also be conversant with the values of the various maps and similar diagrammatic matter published. The indexing of portraits, the illustrations in notable books, fugitive bibliographies which accompany most modern books, the contents of composite books and similar things should be readily in his mind. The Information Bureau, therefore, resolves itself simply into reference work so organised that any question can be answered immediately.

## SOCIAL EVENING.

A Social, on similar lines to that held last May, took place at the Islington Central Library on Wednesday, 31st March. About one hundred members and friends assembled, and spent a most enjoyable evening. The gathering could scarcely be termed representative of the library assistants of London, although Battersea was well represented on the one side, and Leyton on the other. It is to be regretted that more members did not make use of this opportunity of meeting together under very pleasant circumstances. The programme consisted of musical items and humorous sketches, interspersed with dances. Songs were well rendered by Misses H. A. Funnell (Hampstead), and E. Glenister (Islington), and Messrs. Wm. C. Rees (Battersea), and F. Colin Robinson (Patent Office). A vocal duet was pleasingly executed by Miss Brown and Mr. J. D. Stewart (Islington), who, with the assistance of Miss Funnell (Hampstead) and Mr. L. Harri (Islington), also sang a "merry madrigal." Mr. Arthur Holmes (Patent Office) gave, in a musical monologue, a realistic presentation of "How we saved the Barge." Misses O. E. Clarke and C. A. Mitchell (Islington) contributed a pianoforte duet, and Mr. S. T. Ewart two violin soli. A humorous sketch, entitled "The Lady Interviewer," was admirably performed by Misses E. F. Giles and G. O. Skuse (Islington). The story of "A Coster's Conversion" was told by Mr. Manor G. North, who, evidently fearing the consequences, retired hurriedly at its conclusion. Miss Edith Mitchell acted as accompanist, and the President (Mr. W. Benson Thorne), and Vice-President (Mr. H. T. Coutts), as M.C.'s.

## A WELCOME BOOK.

**Savage, E. A.** The Story of Libraries and Book-Collecting. Fcap. 8vo., clo., 237 pp. Routledge. 2s. 6d.

We welcome this book with a certain envy of those assistants who have the advantage of its use in preparing for Section 5 of the Library Association Examinations. It fills a well-recognised gap in our professional literature. In the nature of things it is slight, but supplemented by a few references to Clark's "Care of Books" it is sufficient for an intelligent knowledge of the subject. Its virtues are readability, an evident carefulness which makes for accuracy, and the constant citing of authorities. These last, if followed up, would place the reader in possession of a wide knowledge of little-known library history. The earlier chapters contain the best treatment of the subject we remember to have read; the picture of ancient and mediæval libraries here is a whole and assumes some sort of reality. The later chapters are not so satisfying, and the account of "Popular Town Libraries" is rather meagre; but, of course, the ground is well covered in Ogle's "Free Library," and this may have influenced Mr. Savage towards brevity. Altogether we can frankly and cordially commend the book to our readers as an investment from which they will receive considerable profit.

## OBITUARY.

We regret to announce the death, in sad circumstances, of our member, William Thomas Smith, of the Wimbledon Public Library. Mr. Smith, who was only nineteen years of age, has been for six years on the Wimbledon Staff. One night in last October he fell from his bicycle when descending Wimbledon Hill; no ill effects ensued until January, when symptoms of paralysis set in pointing to cerebral injury, from which he lingered until April 8th, when the end came. Hundreds of people attended the funeral at St. Mark's Church—a proof of the affection in which he was held—among them members of the Libraries Staff, who had sent a beautiful wreath.